

THE **POLISH REVIEW**

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May this Polish orphan's Easter hold the promise of a brighter future for his martyred homeland.



# "PROTECTION AND ASYLUM FOR POLISH VOLUNTEERS"

*Resolution adopted by the National Republican Club on March 26, 1946*

WHEREAS it is the primary purpose of the United Nations Organization to assure freedom from oppression to all peoples throughout the World, and

WHEREAS during the last War about five hundred thousand Polish volunteers, who constituted the largest force of volunteers fighting for the cause of freedom, fought not only for the liberation of their Country after its fourth partition by Stalin and Hitler and after the dark clouds of oppression, torture, persecution and mass murder hovered in a most sinister way over their native Country but also for the freedom of all oppressed peoples,

WHEREAS these Polish volunteers, well organized as separate military units, fought bravely on the battlefields of Dunkirk, Narvik, Tobruk, Cassino and many other places where the battle was most bitter, and

WHEREAS these forces suffered the largest losses of any force on the Allied side, and

WHEREAS they continued to fight for the cause of freedom on the Allied side after the alliance between Stalin and Hitler was severed and Hitler invaded Russia, and

WHEREAS there remain about two hundred thousand of these men and also many women in the parts of Europe not controlled by Russia, and

WHEREAS these Polish volunteers do not want to return to their native Country which is wholly or partially under the domination of a regime, incompatible with their ideals of freedom,

NOW BE IT HEREBY RESOLVED, that the National Republican Club urge the President and the Congress

of the United States to exert all influence possible in the cause and freedom of humanity and demand at the United Nations Organization meeting now taking place that this matter be presented immediately on the agenda of the meeting and that all steps be taken for the protection of these Polish volunteers so as to give them the right of asylum and security in countries where they can enjoy full freedom and true democracy until their native Country again enjoys full independence and a genuine democratic government.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this resolution be sent to the President of the United States and to the appropriate leaders in Congress and that it receive the widest publicity possible.

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Why Jews Are Fleeing Poland

*Annual Subscription, Five Dollars  
Single Copy, Twenty-five Cents*

# Can Free Elections Be Held in Poland?

by A. K. ADAMS

*"The Polish Provisional Government of National Unity shall be pledged to the holding of free and unfettered elections as soon as possible on the basis of universal suffrage and secret ballot. In these elections all democratic and anti-nazi parties shall have the right to take part and to put forward candidates . . ."*

THIS is an excerpt from the Yalta agreement signed by the United States, Great Britain and the Soviet Union.

On March 11, 1946, the Under-Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Mr. McNeil, answering a question put to him in the House of Commons by M. P. Major Donner, stated that Mr. Bolesław Bierut, acting as President of Poland, has assured Mr. Bevin at Potsdam that the elections would be held in the spring of 1946.

More than a year has passed since these agreements were signed, over nine months since these promises were given, and no elections, free or otherwise, have yet been held.

On the contrary, according to a recent Associated Press report, the Polish Provisional Government is seeking to delay the elections until the fall owing "to the chaotic conditions prevailing in Poland."

In the meantime, a commission composed chiefly of declared and undeclared Communist party members has been named to draft a new electoral law, because the provisions for voting embodied in the Constitution of March 17, 1921, which is recognized by the Provisional Government as the legal basis for its existence, are, according to this Government, "out of date."

The fact that despite its commitments, the Provisional Government is keeping silent on the date of the elections, shows clearly that this Government considers the holding of elections in the near future most inopportune.

The reason for such an attitude is the unpopularity of the Communist Party in Poland, and the fear of the Communist-dominated Government that it may suffer an overwhelming defeat at the polls.

The Provisional Government was willing to hold the elections as promised at Potsdam only in the event it succeeded in its attempt to form a single block of parties, thus avoiding an electoral fight by dividing the parliamentary seats among the various parties beforehand.

So far, however, the Government has not achieved this aim. Four out of the six existing parties—the Communists, Socialists, Democrats and Peasants—approved the idea of the block immediately and unconditionally. This was not surprising as it is generally known that all these parties are Communist-dominated and resemble only in name the long-established, respected parties of the pre-war and German occupation period. The fifth, the Labor Party—an offspring of the Christian Democrats—although harboring a few well-known Polish politicians, also decided to join the block. At a recent all-party meeting in Bydgoszcz, Mr. Felczak, a Communist appointee and real leader of the Labor Party, declared the support of his party for the idea of the block.

The sixth—the Polish Peasant Party (PSL)—is the main obstacle in the way of the Communist plan for the elections. It is the only group in present-day Poland which represents to a considerable degree the real Polish political thought. It was brought to life in the early fall of 1945, when the late Mr. Witos decided to break away from the Lublin-made fake Peasant Party and revive his old political group. The untimely death of Mr. Witos, however, placed a question mark over the

political line of his party. Mr. Mikołajczyk, who succeeded Witos as chairman, is a controversial personality even in the ranks of the Peasant Party, owing to his wavering policy, his joining of the Lublin group, and his continued participation in the Communist-dominated Warsaw regime. It is being argued that these acts of Mr. Mikołajczyk gave the Warsaw regime the semblance of democracy, securing for it recognition by the Western powers.

But the sound political instinct of the Polish farmers was manifested during the National Convention of the PSL, held in January 1946 in Warsaw: The delegates gave a cool reception to Mikołajczyk's long speech of appeasement and adopted a strongly worded resolution urging the party leaders to insist upon the holding of free elections based on the Constitution of March 17, 1921 and the existing electoral law. Thus, the Convention impressed upon Mr. Mikołajczyk a firm stand in the inter-party negotiations which followed the Convention.

According to a statement made by Under-Secretary McNeil in the House of Commons on March 11, 1946, Mr. Mikołajczyk announced certain demands in connection with his party's participation in the electoral block. These demands comprised a considerable number of parliamentary seats and the abolition of several Soviet-inspired institutions in Poland like the ill-famed Security Police. The demands were rejected by the Communists and the idea of the single block was dealt a severe blow—at least for the time being.

The Communists are afraid of the elections even with only one party opposing them for they feel their weakness and unpopularity. They know that the Polish Peasant Party would be supported not only by its own members, but also by all patriotic Poles, who voting for the PSL, would cast a vote of distrust and contempt against the Soviet appointed puppets of the Warsaw regime. The members and sympathizers of the powerful National Party, the real Socialists and Christian Democrats, now being denied the right to act openly in officially registered parties by a decree of the Warsaw ersatz-parliament in flagrant violation of the Yalta agreement, may cast their votes for the single remaining opposition party—the PSL.

One would think that the Communists, supported by the hundreds of thousands of Red Army bayonets still haunting Polish cities, towns and villages, and by the Security Police, need entertain no doubts as to the outcome of an electoral fight. Yet, in spite of such powerful support, the Communists need at least several score thousands of voters they could rely upon. Even with the backing of the Red Army and the Security Police, it is extremely difficult to produce an electoral victory out of the blue.

Therefore the Communists need time. They must train more of their sympathizers, agents and agitators. They must liquidate the local leaders of the Polish Peasant Party, (which they are doing on an ever increasing scale). They have not yet lost the hope of forcing the Peasants into submission and accepting the idea of the block by means of a campaign of terror and threats.

An argument used recently by Mr. Gomolka, the Communist Vice-Premier of the Warsaw regime, for the concept of a single block, is the economic catastrophe

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# "A HAPPY ALLELUIA" IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS IN POLAND

by DOROTHY GLADYS SPICER

"WE wish you a happy Alleluia," is the traditional greeting which Poles have exchanged throughout the centuries at the annual Easter feast. At home or in exile, in peace times or war times, in opulence or poverty, — wherever two or three Poles are gathered together, there the great festival honoring Christ's resurrection is observed with solemnity and joy. For Easter to the Pole is more than just another religious holiday; it symbolizes the return of spring, the renewal of life and the cleansing of all living things after winter's destruction and death. It is not strange, therefore, that many pagan elements still exist in the Easter rites of the Polish people.



The Polish Lenten feast always begins on Friday. On the Thursday before Lent, known as *Zapusty*, or Fat Thursday, everyone holds high festival. Carnival balls, masquerades and parties are held. Gypsy bands play provocative music while nimble feet tap out the *mazurkas* and *polkas* for which Poland is famous. All day rich foods are eaten, among them the *ponczki*, or special fried doughnuts which are typical of Fat Thursday's fare. Merrymaking and feasting continue until midnight, when Lent begins.

Since Lent is observed with rigid fasting, it is natural that from time immemorial the Easter feast has assumed immense importance in the eyes of all Poles, whether of the peasant or noble class. Although no hot food may be eaten from *Wielki Piatek*, or Great Friday, until *Wielkanoc*, or Easter, the Friday before Easter is a busy occasion for Polish housewives, who knead and roll out dough for the many feast day cakes. Huge fires are kindled in every cottage and the tantalizing odor of simmering ham and spiced sausages pervades the entire village. In spite of all the food that is cooking, the peasants eat only dry bread and roasted potatoes, in memory of Christ's sufferings.

Every house undergoes a spring cleaning. Mattresses are aired, bedding washed, floors are scrubbed, the holy images dusted. Even the children are set to work polishing copper pots, sanding the floors and hunting for sprigs of box and pine to decorate the holiday table.



Easter egg—Southeastern Poland.

Village girls vie with one another in the decoration of Easter eggs for the *swiecone*, or Easter hallow-fare. The eggs, which are ornamented in three ways, may be classified as

*malowanki*, eggs painted in solid colors with natural substances such as vegetable skins, roots or grains; *pisanke*, eggs batiked in marvelous traditional designs, chiefly animal or geometrical figures, that have been handed down for generations from mother to daughter; and *skorbanki*, eggs dyed in solid colors upon which the outlines of birds, flowers and animals are delicately scratched with a sharp instrument. The designs on the eggs differ from village to village, according to the artistic tradition of the section. The eggs are used to adorn the Easter feast and often are bestowed by the girls on their sweethearts as tokens of special favor.

The church bells are silent on Great Friday. "They have all gone to Rome," people say. In places of worship the image of Christ's body is laid in the sepulchre and decorated with flowers. In villages the peasants assemble at the church to see the Lord's body carried to the sepulchre; in the cities it is customary for groups of people to go from church to church to worship at the tomb. This custom is regarded almost as a social event in Krakow and other large towns.

If Great Friday is a busy day for the average Polish housewife, *Wielka Sobota*, or Great Saturday, is a far busier occasion. First of all a large table is covered with an heirloom cloth, handed down oftentimes from mother to daughter for several generations, and laid with the cold hallow-fare, which the priest comes and blesses. Often a little lamb, symbolizing the Lamb of God, is cunningly fashioned from butter or sugar and given the place of honor in the center of the table. Red paper cut-outs and festoons made from the greens and wild flowers gathered by the children give added emphasis and color to the tempting array of eggs, chickens, suckling pigs, Easter loaves and wheaten cakes, hams, headcheese and coils of sausage which encircle great piles of shelled hard-boiled eggs.

The priest makes the village rounds, sprinkles the tables with holy water and blesses the hallow-fare, which remains untouched until the following day. Many people, too poor to have a large feast table, dress in their brightest garments and carry to the church baskets of cheese, eggs and other Easter foods to be blessed there. The churchyard resembles market day as men, women and children mingle in animated little clusters and finally set down their baskets, while awaiting the priest's blessing.

The Resurrection Service is held on Easter Eve. The imposing figure of the risen Christ dominates the altar, which blazes with scores of lighted candles. To many Polish peasants the "blessing of fire and water" is an important ceremony. The old fire on the hearth is extinguished and a new one kindled from a lighted taper brought from the Resurrection Mass. A small bottle of water, blessed at church, is carefully preserved in the home, for this water is thought to ward off sickness and disease from cattle and fruit trees.

When the bells peal forth at midnight on *Wielkanoc*, or Easter, people say they "have flown back from Rome." In olden days it was declared that the person who was not awake when the bells rang must forfeit his right to the Easter feast.



Old folk and young don festive attire and attend the joyous Easter Mass. In every home the holiday feast consists of the cold hallow-fare, for no fire is lighted on this sacred day.

As family and guests assemble for the Easter meal the head of the family cuts a colored egg into thin slices and shares a portion of a slice with each person present, from oldest to youngest, the most important to the humblest. As the egg is eaten congratulations and good wishes are exchanged. "We wish you a happy alleluia," and "Best luck throughout the year," are the greetings that fly from person to person before the Lenten fast is broken and the Easter feast begins.

Once the solemnities of Easter have been observed with fitting ceremony the villages resound with merry-making and laughter. Visits are paid to neighbors, there are dances and games, an exchange of eggs and the observance of customs which date back to early times.

In some parts of Eastern Poland, for example, there is an old peasant belief in a subterranean world inhabited by folk who never see the sun. Often the boys and girls throw gaily painted egg shells into the streams, so their message of spring may reach the race that dwells in eternal darkness.

On *Drugie Swieto Wielkanocne*, or Easter Monday, *smigus* or *dyngus* is the name applied to an ancient festival that permits the boys to duck all the girls in the village.

In towns and cities many of the boys conceal small atomizers under their jackets and squirt their victims with perfume. In rural districts the ceremony takes a rougher form, for bands of boys chase after the girls and drench them with buckets of water as they yell, "Smigus."

In some places the boys capture the strongest, most buxom girl in the village, drag her to the bank of a stream or river and give her a complete ducking. The *smigus* festival is said by some to have originated in the tenth century, when the Poles accepted Christianity and were baptized *en masse*. However this may be, the rite has persisted on down through the ages as a sort of early spring purification ceremony.

In interesting contrast to the typical Easter festivities already noted, is an early seventeenth century account of a Polish nobleman's Easter table. The description that follows comes from an old almanac of the Duchy of Poznan:

"This year the Palatine S. gave a splendid Easter Feast at Dereczyn, at which a great number of Polish and Lithuanian lords attended. A lamb seasoned with Pistachio plums and other costly spices, was placed in the center of the table. But only the ladies, the senators, the first dignitaries of the crown, and the clergy were admitted to partake of that delicate dish. On one side of the table four colossal roasted wild boars, and stuffed with pigs, sausages and hams, were laid down and represented the seasons of the year. The cook exhibited the most masterly abilities in contriving to



roast these huge animals entire. On the opposite side, twelve stags, with gilt antlers and adorned with emblems of corresponding months attracted general admiration. . . . The prodigiously large cakes, the circumference of which could only be measured by yards, were fifty-two in number, to answer that of the weeks in the year. Three hundred sixty-five *babas* in honor of as many days, hedged the whole and closed the circle of the year. In addition to this, the same numbers and divisions were represented by four golden pitchers filled with wine of King Batory's time; twelve silver ones with King Sigismundus' wine; fifty-two silver barrels with that of Cyprus, Spain and Italy; three hundred sixty-five hogsheads of Hungary; and lastly, a vat containing eight thousand, seven hundred sixty pints of mead, the number of hours in the annual revolution."

An account of an even more prodigal Easter feast is given by an early writer from Krakow:

"I was present yesterday at the Easter Feast given by N. C., one of the magistrates of our town. On an immense table, covered with the finest cloth in the world, the circumference of which might have afforded comfortable seats for at least one hundred persons, twelve massive silver dishes bore the weight of salt pork, suckling pigs, spiced sausage and pyramids of eggs, painted in varied colors and devices, but, chiefly in red. A group of figures made of pastry and sugar represented the action and plot of a comic play. Pilatus, for instance, was exhibited in the act of plucking Mahomet's pocket of a sausage. . . . A lamb of great beauty occupied the center of the table. I would have given all the riches and dainties I saw there for the eyes of that pet creature, for they were nothing less than two precious diamonds, each of a nut's size. I further remarked large silver-gilt decanters and cruets with oil and vinegar. Four enormous pitchers, filled with old mead, stood amidst a host of golden cups. Silver plates, with preserves and all sorts of fruits, with which Providence has so bountifully blessed our country, formed another circle. Enamelled baskets contained musty bottles of choice and rarest wines. . . . The principal cake was at least four yards in circumference, and one in height. Different figures adorned its edge. The speaking images of the Twelve



Easter egg—District of Podlasie.



"Smigus-Dyngus" by Zofia Stryjenska. Polish village girls are drenched on Easter Monday.

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# POLISH PEASANT WAYSIDE SHRINES and HOLY IMAGES

by DR. IRENA PIOTROWSKA



*The Afflicted Jesus.* 18th-century folk sculpture in wood from Kamien in Upper Silesia.

THROUGHOUT Poland, from the western borders to the eastern frontiers, from the Baltic in the north to the Carpathians in the south, small wayside chapels enshrining peasant carved or painted "holy images" form characteristic landmarks. As a rule they stand at cross-roads, often in forests and meadows, in villages and suburbs of towns, adding to the picturesqueness and unforgettable romantic appeal of the Polish countryside. At times, miniature chapels, with Christ Crucified as the center figure, are suspended from crosses, more rarely from trees.

The custom of hanging diminutive shrines on trees seems to be the oldest one. According to the late Polish



*Wayside Shrine with Christ Falling under the Cross,* from the Cracow Region.

hale Valley, wayside shrines that are equally attractive and unique in style, may be come upon in all corners of Poland.

Some are built of brick and even stone, but preponderantly they are of wood. Wood is the medium closest to the Polish heart. Out of wood, the prehistoric ancestors of the Poles fashioned their homesteads and their temples; many beautiful wooden country churches have stood for centuries throughout Poland; in wood, Poland's greatest sculptor of the late Middle Ages, Wit Stwosz created his masterpiece for the Church of Our Lady in Cracow, and countless religious figures have been wrought in wood by Polish artists before and after him; and it was thus in wood that the Polish peasant has built his roadside sanctuaries and has carved his "holy images" to place in them. It was also by incising woodblocks that he at first produced his religious pictures to be hung at home or in his chapels.

These wayside chapels, however small they may at times be, form part of Polish folk architecture, being a reflection of the numerous wooden country churches built by folk artists. Most of these churches derive from the Baroque period and are a curious mixture of Gothic and Baroque forms combined with architectural and ornamental elements typical of the Polish villager's wooden cottage. Like the peasant's churches and huts, the way-

side sanctuaries are wrought by the axe and the broadax of the village carpenter and bring out all the characteristic features and all the beauty inherent in the material used: wood.

The wooden figures of saints adorning the chapels are strikingly expressive. Some date back to the early eighteenth century, but the majority of them were produced one hundred years later, when the creative activity of the Polish peasants reached its peak; still others are of quite recent date. Nevertheless, their style has not changed through the centuries. They all betray Gothic and Baroque influences, as their creators modelled them after medieval and Baroque sculptures preserved in the churches. But, naturally enough, the peasant carvers of "holy images" have produced a naive modification of the historical styles and in many instances they attained a peasant style definitely their own. The figures are striking in their compactness of form. But accuracy of proportion and anatomical structure were of no interest to the folk artists. They sought above all to express themselves and did not concern themselves with form. Creating his sculpture, the peasant was entirely given over to



*Wayside Shrine with Christ Crucified,* from the Eastern Carpathians.

the expression of his feelings. And the dominant emotion in the sculptures of the Polish country people is an unutterable sadness. Small wonder that it is the figures of suffering Christ that are most frequently displayed in the wayside sanctuaries. The Crucified Savior bends his noble, tragic head, of disproportionately large size, over an emaciated but not realistically treated body; or he falls under the cross's weight or stands upright with bound hands. But to the foremost manifestations of the Polish peasant's "holy images" belong the wooden seated figures of the "Man of Sorrows," petrified with anguish. The Polish origin of this type of seated Christ, with one hand on his knees, the other bent at the elbow and supporting his head—is beyond question. These figures, called "The Afflicted Jesus" by the peasants themselves, represent the crest of Polish folk creativeness. Of other saints venerated in the roadside chapels, the Blessed Virgin with the Infant in her arms occurs most often. St. Jadwiga, St. Isidore, patron of farmers, St. Nepomucen, St. Barbara and The Holy Trinity follow next in frequency.

Since the wayside chapels are small, so are the sculptured figures enshrined by them. Ordinarily they reach from 10 to 18 inches. Only those that sometimes stand at the foot of a cross and those placed close to the churches are made life-size.

As a rule, the peasant creates single figures out of a piece of tree trunk and only afterwards, if need be, does he arrange them on a common base, sometimes adding a wooden background. He paints his sculptures, accentuating the various parts of the body and drapery. The limited number of the colors used and the lack of any shading indicate that the folk sculptor approaches the problem of polychromy entirely from the decorative point of view and by no means resorts to painting in order to enhance the realism of the figures. The only colors he uses are red, dark yellow, black, green, and blue, and he prepares them himself from powdered pigments. The harmony created is of a primitive kind, the colors being marked by gaudiness. But since the sculptures stand in open shrines, they are exposed to atmospheric conditions and soon the sharp colors become attenuated and produce an extremely pleasing effect.



*Christ Crucified.* Cassubian Folk Painting on Glass.

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# THE POLISH ROMAN CATHOLIC UNION OF AMERICA

by FRANK STANLEY BARC

THE Polish Roman Catholic Union has gained world-wide fame as the "Mother of Polish Organizations" in the United States. Contributing to its renown are the P. R. C. U. Archives and Museum in Chicago, Illinois.

Through fraternal organization activities the Polish Roman Catholic Union is a source of insurance underwriting to 143,000 members; as guardian of the P. R. C. U. Archives and Museum it functions as the seat of Polish culture in this country.

The first organizing meeting of the Polish Roman Catholic Union was held at Detroit, Michigan in 1873. Organizers of the "Mother of Polish Organizations" were the Rev. Fr. Vincent Barzynski, Chicago, first chaplain of the P. R. C. U.; his brother, Jan Barzynski, one of the first Polish editors in the United States and father of Brig. Gen. Joseph Barzynski of the U. S. Army, also a Chicagoan; Peter Kielbasa, Chicago city treasurer, known to three million persons as "Honest Pete," and the Rev. Fr. Theodore Gieryk, Detroit, Michigan. Organizational plans were perfected at the second P. R. C. U. convention held in Chicago, Illinois, in 1874.

During its first sixteen years of existence the Polish Roman Catholic Union held forth as a benefit organization; in 1886 the P. R. C. U. became a fraternal order and insurance society. Operating as a mutual aid group for its membership the Polish Roman Catholic Union has been instrumental in fostering a spirit of national pride among Americans of Polish ancestry and origin in the history, achievements and objectives of the mother country, Poland.

This organization is hailed far and wide as the foremost single group responsible for the initiation in the United States of a national program for the construction of Polish Roman Catholic churches and parochial schools.

An unusually outstanding feature in the mutual aid program practiced under P. R. C. U. auspices is the appli-

cation of funds towards scholarship loans to needy students and youthful members of the organization, \$400,646 of P. R. C. U. stipends for this laudable purpose having thus far been recorded in the organization's annals. Similarly, \$339,711 of P. R. C. U. funds have been devoted towards general relief.

The enviable record in fraternal, insurance, religious and civic enterprises of the Polish Roman Catholic Union since its formation in 1873, has gained for it international renown. Its 143,000 members—130,000 adults and 13,000 juveniles—are divided into 140 circuits, 1,130 societies, 845 juvenile detachments, with representation in 22 states.

At present the Polish Roman Catholic Union has \$86,000,000 worth of insurance in force. This insurance is for maximum \$5,000 policies for men and women and \$1,000 policies among juveniles. The insurance age range is from birth to 16 years for juveniles and from 16 to 60 years for adults.

Adult insurance is divided into six classes—ordinary life, twenty year endowment, twenty year life, endowment at age 60, ten year term, twenty year term. Juvenile insurance is underwritten on five plans—term to age 16, educational annuity at age 18, total life, twenty pay life, twenty year endowment.

Total assets of the Polish Roman Catholic Union are \$24,000,000, of which \$10,342,980 is invested in United States Government Bonds.

During World War II approximately 10,000 P. R. C. U. members served in the armed forces of the United States, 5,000 P. R. C. U. members were in the service in World War I. During the World War which drew to a close on August 14, 1945, the supreme sacrifice was made by 478 P. R. C. U. members in the uniform of the U. S. military establishment.

Members of the Polish Roman Catholic Union have also participated in a major degree during World War II in such diversified voluntary work as USO activities, Red Cross campaigns, blood bank donations, salvage drives, civilian defense programs, war loan campaigns, recruiting drives and other public-participation efforts.

An activity which has gained international acclaim for the P. R. C. U. emanates from the unstinting toil of its women's department in the field of relief work. In this endeavor the women's division of the organization carries on for Poland's poor, needy, distressed and displaced inhabitants, the personnel of the



Polish Roman Catholic Union President Jo J. Olejniczak (right) greets Charles Rozmarek, President of the Polish National Alliance.

Polish army, and Polish refugees throughout the world, furnishing these unfortunates with the essentials for subsistence.

Other special features, in addition to the educational loans and the women's department work, in the realm of charity under P. R. C. U. auspices include the providing of financial assistance to disabled members, and the making of regular donations to orphanages, schools and charitable institutions.

Among P. R. C. U. youth activities are an extensive sports program sponsored in behalf of its juvenile membership; participation in the Boy Scout and Girl Scout movements is likewise fostered and encouraged by the Polish Roman Catholic Union.

In passing it can be noted that the P. R. C. U. through its underwriting of insurance for its membership paid out \$288,957 for the demise of its 478 members who passed on during World War II participation in the U. S. armed services.

The Polish Roman Catholic Union, in its own headquarters building in Chicago, Illinois, maintains its own printing establishment and publishes its own weekly newspaper, "Narod Polski," which is one of the foremost publications in the Polish language printed and distributed in the United States.

Another activity under Polish Roman Catholic Union sponsorship is its library, the main branch at Chicago having 18,000 volumes while local units are also maintained in a number of other cities.

The main offices of the Polish Roman Catholic Union, at 984 Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago 22, Illinois, in addition to being the focal center for the series of activities described above are also the source of operation of the internationally renowned Polish Roman Catholic Union Archives and Museum housed at the same address.

This major cultural endeavor under Polish Roman Catholic Union sponsorship came into being on October 15, 1935, and is the repository of the finest collections of Paderewski relics in existence as well as the New World's home of rare Polonica.

Among the curios under the protective wing of the P. R. C. U. are priceless paintings, papers, uniforms, and a host of relics which were forwarded to it by the National Museum of Poland just before the outbreak of World War II and the virtual destruction of Poland's capital city. Another pre-war contributor was the World Alliance of Poles Abroad. In fact,



Micislaus Haiman, Custodian of the P. R. C. U. Archives and Museum, poses between a bust of Paderewski and the great Polish artist's last piano.

because of the destruction wrought in Poland in the course of the war, the P. R. C. U. Museum is actually the only recognized Polish museum of any consequence being maintained anywhere on the globe today.

Although the collection at the Museum includes uniforms, weapons, charts, maps, glassware, paintings and other priceless items of Polish origin going back to the Middle Ages in some instances, perhaps of greatest public interest are the Kosciuszko collection, the early American immigrant gifts and other Polish-American relics. Above all else, however, is the great collection of Paderewski items—the last piano used by him, paintings, clothing, letters and other mementoes of the beloved

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Main hall in the Polish Roman Catholic Union Museum. Upper right and left are paintings by Jan Henryk Rosen and between them is a portrait of Saint Bobola from St. Peter's Cathedral in Rome.



Bedroom in which Paderewski died. Exhibited at the Polish Roman Catholic Union Museum.



# "BEYOND ENDURANCE" A Film of Polish Heroism and Martyrdom

"TO the memory of the men—to the memory of the women—to the memory of the children who died in this war, to the memory of all those who fought openly and in secret, above and under ground, on the seven seas and in the air for the freedom of Poland and for the freedom of mankind—

"To the memory of the innocent victims of German murder camps—we dedicate this faithful and true record of life and of battle, of martyrdom and of exile, and of Polish faith and hope that out of their blood, out of their toil, out of their sacrifices—a new world will be born in which evil, oppression and bondage will have no place . . ."

Thus reads the dedication to *Beyond Endurance*—a feature-length documentary film just released by the Cine-Art Co. in New York. *Beyond Endurance* is the story of Polish suffering and valor throughout the long horrible years since Germany unleashed the fury of total war against Poland to this day when so many hundreds of thousands of Polish men, women and children are still denied the fruits of victory in displaced persons camps.

The film opens in peaceloving pre-war Poland with rapidly shifting scenes of Polish achievement during the 20 years of Polish independence and glimpses of the picturesque folk and ancient landmarks that made up the beauty of the land of the White Eagle.

The transition from this peaceful world to war is sudden and tragic. For more than an hour the camera records chapter after

chapter of the martyrdom and resistance of the Polish people. The German blitz against Poland; the defense of Warsaw; the reorganization of the Polish Army in France, England and Russia; Nazi terror in Poland; atrocity scenes from concentration camps in Lublin, Gliwice and Poznan; the heartbreaking exodus of Polish refugees and children released from concentration and labor camps in Russia to Iran, Palestine, Egypt, Arabia, North Africa, Mexico and New Zealand; the participation of Polish forces in the defense of Tobruk; the invasion of Italy; the epic battle for Monte Cassino; the liberation of Bologna and Piedimonte by the Poles; the reception of the Second Corps by Pope Pius XII; the memorial services for the victims of the Warsaw Ghetto in the Roman Synagogue; the August 1944 insurrection in Warsaw; Polish forces in France, Belgium and Holland; and the life of Polish displaced persons in Germany—all this is dramatically presented for the first time in fascinating, well edited episodes.

The memorable events flashed on the screen are accompanied by a running commentary written by Joseph Wittlin, the Polish poet of international renown, whose novel *Salt of the Earth* has been translated into 17 languages. Warm and human, the story is as artistically beautiful as it is enlightening. Background music for *Beyond Endurance* based on Chopin's compositions, has been arranged by W. Eiger, whose musical illustrations for such notable French pictures as *Pepe le Moco* and *the Baker's Wife* have helped make them outstanding. The film has been edited by Vincent Bejtman, with Z. Prumbs serving as art advisor. Edward Fuller is the narrator. *Beyond Endurance* is distributed by Cine-Art Co., 117 West 48th Street, New York City.

## "A HAPPY ALLELUIA" IN THE GOOD OLD DAYS IN POLAND

(Continued from page 5)

Apostles were distinguished from others by their size. Judas, with his yellow, saffron-colored mustaches, amused me most. The figure of Jesus Christ, holding a superb banner, stood erect in the center of the cake. Over Our Saviour's head an angel, suspended by a wire, scarcely perceptible, was seen directing his course towards Heaven and dropping from his lips the following motto: 'Resurrexit sicut dixit, Alleluja.' Other cakes represented profane or mythological subjects. In a lake, filled with white mead, gold and silver fish were seen swimming. Nymphs were freely bathing amongst them, whilst a malicious Cupid sat on the brim of the cake and shot darts at their sparkling eyes, which they vainly strove to conceal."

In early as in modern times, the parish priest came to bless the hallow-fare before the feast began. But,

say the sly old chroniclers, housewives removed some of the choicest foods before the holy man arrived, lest the zeal of his sprinkling with holy water cause their utter ruin!

Early feasts featured the same delicacies that are eaten today—the lofty *babas*, or sponge cakes, the *mazurki*, or delicious pastries of many varieties, the sugar lambs and pyramids of hard-boiled eggs, surrounded by serpent-like sausage coils.

The same custom of sharing a bit of egg with each person in the assembly prevailed then as now; the same Easter greeting, "We wish you a happy alleluia," was exchanged between host and guests.

Poland is a land of ancient tradition. The tradition of her Easter festival has come down unbroken from generation to generation. Easter, with its unique customs and beautiful symbolism, lives forever in every Polish heart.



Scenes from *Beyond Endurance*, Cine-Art Co.



## POLISH ROMAN CATHOLIC UNION OF AMERICA

(Continued from page 9)

late musician-statesman who, more than any other single individual, epitomizes the close cultural association as well as governmental bond which has existed for well over two centuries between Poland and the United States of America.

The Ignace Jan Paderewski collection is grouped in the recently opened Paderewski memorial room of the Polish Roman Catholic Union Archives and Museum.

Many thousands of visitors have been welcomed to the P. R. C. U. Museum in the ten years since it was first founded and opened to the public. As time goes on, the Archives and Museum maintained by the Polish Roman Catholic Union will attract many, many hundreds of thousands more interested visitors from all over the earth.

A foremost current undertaking of the P. R. C. U. Museum is its collecting of standard literary works in all languages and on all manner of subjects for the post-war rehabilitation and resuscitation of libraries in Poland.

As a means of building up its own collection of archives and other important relics pertaining to Poland, her history and her culture, the Polish Roman Catholic Union Archives and Museum seeks donations of any of the following items: books and pamphlets on the history and biography of the Poles in the United States; reports of Polish-American Societies and Institutions of any kind; books and pamphlets by American Poles on any subject; books on Poland or any Polish subject in any language, published in the United States; files of Polish-American newspapers or magazines, complete volumes or single numbers; portraits of Polish-American pioneers and eminent persons; photographs and pictures illustrating Polish life in America; autographs and manuscripts, maps, charts, medals, badges, uniforms and banners of Polish-American Societies.

Communications and gifts may be addressed to the Custodian, Mr. M. Haiman, P. R. C. U. Archives and Museum, 984-86 Milwaukee Ave., Chicago 22, Illinois.

The many donors of gifts which make up the collection of the P. R. C. U. Museum are cordially thanked by the Polish Roman Catholic Union for their contributions towards keeping alive the saga of Polish culture. The work they have done in this direction is best summarized in an address by the Honorable Dwight H. Green, Governor of the State of Illinois, made at Chicago on June 27, 1943 upon the occasion of the 70th anniversary celebration of the founding of the Polish Roman Catholic Union of America:

"Perhaps the greatest undertaking of your organization today," the Governor declared, "is your effort to preserve for mankind the valued Polish culture which the Nazis have attempted to destroy. That you have advanced far in this cultural battle with the Nazis, may be attested to by the magnificent museum founded by the Polish Roman Catholic Union in this city. We are not only happy that you have been able to assemble this highly instructive collection, but we are particularly happy that you have chosen our own City of Chicago as the site for your museum. Indeed, it is another step in that long series of achievements which have brought Chicago from a frontier outpost to a world cultural leader.

"The museum's Paderewski exhibit is one which is of intense interest to all of us Americans who know and love his music, and who thrilled at his marvelous skill on the piano. The Joseph Conrad exhibit brings another familiar name to all of us, because there are few adult

Americans who have not enjoyed the enthralling sea stories of that great Polish author.

"Your museum also reminds us that the Polish people have contributed tremendously to the world's scientific progress. The Copernicus exhibit makes us recall that Christopher Columbus was familiar with the geographical teachings of the great master before he set sail on the momentous voyage which was to result in the discovery of a new world. And our modern scientific progress owes much to the work of your world-renowned Madame Curie.

"With such high regard for Poland's world contributions to the arts and letters, I cannot praise too highly the successful efforts of the Polish Roman Catholic Union to preserve that culture and to establish a museum here in Chicago in order that all of us may benefit. Your achievement is positive proof that Poland cannot die. It is the result of feelings so devout and of a love and loyalty so sacred that it can never be exterminated by Nazism, or by any other kind of totalitarian barbarism and cruelty."

The Executive Officers of the Union are:

John J. Olejniczak, President; A. A. Rutkowski, Vice-President; Antoinette Czerniak, Lady Vice-President; Rev. Felix J. Kachnowski, Chaplain; S. S. Grabowski, Secretary General; Anthony Kozubal, Treasurer; Stanley T. Kusper, General Counsel; Dr. Walter A. Dziuk, High Medical Examiner; and Zygmunt Stefanowicz, Editor.

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Splendid work in the scholarship field for poor and deserving students is being done by the Educational Department of the Union composed of the following members: Rev. S. Radniecki, Rev. I. S. Renklewski, Rev. Dr. M. Starzynski, J. Mucha, C. Gazinski, Antoinette Moskal and Lillian Ziolkowski.

Mr. Olejniczak, President of the Union, was a member of the Relief Committee, which visited Poland lately. Speaking about the situation in Poland his final appeal always ends this way: "The poor children in Poland are dying from hunger. We must hurry with help."

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# Why Jews Are Fleeing Poland

**T**HE United Polish Press in America has published the following analysis of the Jewish question in Poland offered to a war correspondent in Frankfurt by a well-known Jewish leader who recently escaped from Poland:

*The Jewish nation suffered more than any other during this past war. Those Jews who miraculously managed to survive in Europe, are physically exhausted and morally beaten. Above all else, they wish peace and stabilized conditions in which they might be able to live and work normally.*

*Jews are perfectly well aware that Poland, because of its geographical situation and because of political and internal factors, is not a country which can assure them a peaceful existence. Poland will for a long time to come be the arena of internal political strife. Conditions will not return to normal soon. Meanwhile the Jews may become the victims of the conflict.*

*If, with Russian support, the extreme leftist elements win out in Poland, the country will be Sovietized. Of course, the overwhelming majority of the Polish nation would not accept such a turn of events.*

*If, on the other hand, "clean" unfettered elections are held in Poland under the control of an Allied Commission, the truly democratic elements, hostile to Communism, will doubtless emerge victorious. Can one suppose for an instant in such a case that the Communists would accept their defeat gracefully? Supported by Russia, they would not abandon their struggle for power. Thus, however one looks at it, conditions in Poland will not be settled. The Jews, who are endowed with a greater intuition than are other nations, are well oriented in the situation. They realize that they may again bear the brunt of this tug-of-war. The "pogrom" tradition in Russia has not been wiped out. It might even happen that a Jewish pogrom in Poland would prove necessary to "demonstrate" to the world*

*that the "fascist" elements are gaining the upper hand and that therefore foreign intervention is called for. Such an intervention would of course simply mean the introduction or the keeping of foreign troops in Poland. The staging and exploiting of Jewish pogroms as a political expedient is an old, well-known method, disgusting and base. The Jews are aware of this, they fear this most and prefer to leave Poland and the other countries of Eastern Europe beforehand.*

*There are also many other reasons why Jews are fleeing from Poland and other countries in the Russian sphere of influence. Basing their opinion on what they see happening in Poland and the neighboring states, the Jews are coming to the conclusion that there are no prospects for any large-scale activity in the economic field for them. Private initiative, and the enterprising quality characterizing the Jewish people—are being systematically persecuted and destroyed in Poland; even the small industrial plants are being nationalized and expropriated without compensation. Trade is increasingly difficult and in view of the creation by the government of central trade committees on the Soviet pattern—the outlook for trade expansion is bleak. Private banking is at a standstill and will soon die a natural death, inasmuch as all economic life is to be nationalized. The Warsaw Government is bending all its efforts to that end.*

*Jobs in government agencies, which are sprouting like mushrooms after the rain, pay as little as the work of a laborer in state-owned factories. The monthly salary of the civil servant and the monthly wages of the laborer are barely sufficient for two weeks existence. Where are the means for the next two weeks to come from?*

*People in Poland are selling everything they have, are supplementing their income by trading; government workers accept bribes, workers are forced to steal coal and materials from the factories. In brief, poverty and misery are conducive to demoralization. Such are the reasons why Jews are fleeing from all countries occupied by Russia.*

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## CAN FREE ELECTIONS BE HELD IN POLAND?

(Continued from page 3)

which has befallen Hungary after the Smallholders Party achieved a victory in the elections. It was an argument and a threat. What Mr. Gomolka meant was that if a party regarded by the Soviets with disfavor should win the elections, Poland's mighty Eastern neighbor may pull the economic strings in a way which would bring the nation to the verge of economic catastrophe and thus force the patriotic majority into political submission.

With such a gloomy picture as the background of an "election analysis," one is bound to arrive at the following conclusion:

Assuming that the idea of a single block of parties—on the Bulgarian or Yugoslav model—is incompatible with the democratic idea of elections, the decisions of the Crimean Conference with regard to Poland may be imple-

mented if:

(1) All democratic parties — as listed above — are allowed to participate in the elections and the present fake parties are dissolved,

(2) the new electoral law is drawn up by duly appointed representatives of all parties,

(3) the Red Army is withdrawn from Poland,

(4) the Security Police is abolished,

(5) an international commission supervises the elections, as on the basis of actual experience, the Polish Provisional Government cannot be trusted with being the sole supervisor.

Even if only one out of the above five conditions were to remain unfulfilled, the elections would be a farce, and the Parliament and Government coming out of such elections would be anything but a real representative of the Polish people.

## POLISH PEASANT WAYSIDE SHRINES AND HOLY IMAGES

(Continued from page 7)

When the peasant puts woodcuts or paintings into his little sanctuaries, he inserts a glass door in the front. However, woodcuts and paintings seldom are the delight of the art lover who roves through the Polish countryside, since the farmer prefers to guard his holy pictures at home, hanging them on the walls of his hut.

The subjects and the treatment of the peasant's pictures correspond closely to those encountered among his carved images. The "Crucifixions" and other scenes from Christ's Passion, engraved in wood or painted on glass,—at times on canvas, paper, or wood panel—belong among the most sincere and most expressive creations ever produced on that theme. As in his carved figures so also in the human forms that emerge from his religious paintings and woodcuts, the Polish peasant unwittingly reveals his innermost sentiments, his deeply hidden pains and sorrows. On the other hand, his multiple representations of the Mother of God are patterned after the miraculous Madonnas venerated in various churches.

Again, some of the woodcuts date back to the eighteenth century and some are from our time; like the carvings the woodcuts too are colored—by means of stencilling. As years went by, the peasant began to protect his woodcuts by covering them with glass, which, to augment the color effect, he soon partially decorated with transparent paint. Finally, toward the beginning of the past century, his love of color led him to paint his pictures directly on the reverse side of the glass. In this way peasant painting on glass was born in central Poland, in the Baltic region of Kaszuby, or Cassubia, and among the highlanders of the Eastern Carpathians. Simultaneously, painting on glass in the Podhale Valley in the Western Carpathians was encouraged by influences coming from neighboring Slovakia. Today, Polish paintings on glass are among the most precious relics of Polish folk art. Some of the most beautiful specimens are still housed in wayside shrines, although during the twenty years of Poland's political freedom, art experts made efforts to save them from inevitable, slow decay by removing them into museums.

In many parts of Poland the wayside sanctuaries are embellished with paper decorations made by country girls, especially in preparation for religious and folk festivities. These exquisite colored paper ornaments themselves form a unique and fascinating part of Polish peasant art.

The Polish wayside shrines with their carved and painted "holy images" have not remained unnoticed by foreign visitors to the Polish land. Indeed, they have

left a lasting impression on their minds—and in their hearts. In an article written for the *Tygodnik Polski*, a Polish language literary magazine appearing in New York, Madame Rosa Bailly, a devoted, unswerving friend of Poland, reports in touching words how she stirred up an interest among Polish soldiers stationed in France in erecting wayside shrines on French soil that would leave a permanent vestige of their stay there and would be an expression of their unshaken faith in God and their country. Her project was accepted with enthusiasm. The first Polish shrine in France was constructed near the farm of "Lwow" in the vicinity of Camp Espagots. It stands in the shadow of an old chestnut tree. It was designed by a Polish soldier-artist and executed exclusively by those who worked on the farm. A replica of the "Miraculous Madonna of Ostra Brama" in Wilno, a white Polish eagle, and the coat-of-arms of Lwow with the inscribed device "Semper fidelis," have been placed in the little chapel's interior.

A second chapel was built at some distance from Camp Seffonds, at the turn of the road, near a brook flowing between two rows of trees. On a base formed by an old stone found in the neighborhood, arose a miniature sanctuary of spruce shingles. It strongly reminds one of the Podhale wayside shrines. A sculptured and painted Madonna is surrounded by these words: "Our Lady of Czestochowa, pray for Poland and France."

Still another chapel was built near the entrance to Camp Ivron, not far from Pau. The soldier Leskiewicz, poet, painter, and sculptor, designed it. On a quadrangular base four miniature columns support a small roof which protects an image executed in mosaic. Flower wreaths, artfully cut from paper, decorate the facade. The epigraph speaks for itself: "In memory of the Polish Forces."

The three chapels on the roads of France were consecrated by priests in the presence of Polish soldiers and multitudes of French peasants, all moved to tears. Madame Bailly received an eloquent letter from the designer of the shrine near the "Lwow" farm: ". . . Perhaps some time in the future," writes the artist, "someone will light a candle before the pale countenance of the Madonna from far-off Poland and give a thought to the wanderers who without families and roofs over their heads roved over the wide world, to fight for 'our Freedom and yours' . . . And during the summer months the leaves of the chestnut tree which embrace the shrine will tell her the immemorial French fables, while during the winter the chapel will console the leafless tree with tales of the distant, northern land of Poland."



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